



the Claims:

Please cancel Claims 1-6 and amend Claims 7-24 as indicated below. The status of all claims is as follows:

1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A ~~program recording~~ computer readable medium storing a program to cause a computer to perform message-address management processing in a system capable of exchanging messages among a plurality of ~~servers~~, servers and clients, wherein the program ~~causes the~~ causes a server computer to perform:

~~absence response information accepting processing, when a mail~~ a message address of a ~~certain~~ member of a ~~mail~~ a message group ~~changes~~, exchanging is changed, so as to ~~receive~~ absence response information including at least an old address and a new address of the ~~member~~; member is caused to be received from the client;

~~notice receiver extraction processing to extract a mail address of another member of the mail group from a previously provided mail list for the mail group; determining, from a plurality of provided message address lists, a message address list including the old address of the member, and extracting message addresses of the rest of the members of the determined message address list;~~

~~notice-destination-determination processing to specify~~ specifying a server to which the absence response information is to be provided, on the basis of the ~~extracted mail~~ extracted message address; and

~~absence-response information distribution processing to distribute~~ distributing the absence response information to the specified server.

8. (Currently Amended) A ~~program-recording~~ computer readable medium according to claim 7, wherein the absence response information ~~received by the~~ absence-response information-accepting processing contains information regarding a ~~valid period~~ a period of validity of the absence response information.

9. (Currently Amended) A ~~program-recording-medium~~ computer readable according to claim 7, wherein ~~the absence-response information distribution processing distributes simultaneously~~ a plurality of pieces of the absence response information to be distributed to the same server, ~~to which the absence response information is to be provided.~~ server are gathered together for distribution.

10. (Currently Amended) A ~~program-recording~~ computer readable medium storing a program to cause a computer to perform message-address management

processing in a system ~~capable of~~ exchanging messages among a plurality of servers, servers and clients, wherein the program causing the computer to perform:

~~absence response information receiving processing to receive~~ receiving, from a ~~server~~ server, absence response information including at least an old address and a new address of a ~~certain~~ member of a ~~mail~~ message exchanging group;

~~absence response information management processing to store and manage the~~
~~absence response information;~~

~~address judgment processing to judge when receiving a message to be~~
~~transmitted to another server, judging whether an address of an accepted transmission mail~~
~~or not an original address of the received message matches the old address contained in the~~
~~absence response information; and~~

~~transfer processing to transmit the mail after replacement of the address~~
~~replacing the original address of the message with the new address, a new address associated~~
~~with the old address matching the original address; and when the address of the mail matches~~
~~the old address contained in the absence response information.~~

~~transmitting the message using the replaced address, which is the new address~~
~~in the absence response information.~~

11. (Currently Amended) A ~~program recording~~ computer readable
medium according to claim 10, ~~wherein the program causes the computer to perform transfer~~

~~notification processing, wherein, when the mail~~ the message has been transferred transmitted to the new address ~~by the transfer processing, in order to notify~~ address, notifying an administrator of the message exchange system or a requestor of ~~the mail~~ the message transmission that ~~the mail~~ the message has been transferred to the new address.

12. (Currently Amended) A ~~program recording~~ computer readable medium storing a program to cause a computer to perform message-address management processing in a system ~~capable of~~ exchanging messages among a plurality of ~~servers,~~ servers and clients, wherein the program causes the computer to perform:

~~absence response information creation processing to accept,~~ when a ~~mail~~ a message address changes, ~~an input data of~~ of a member of a message exchanging group is changed, creating absence response information including at least an old address and a new address corresponding to the ~~change;~~ message address; and

~~absence response information provision processing to transmit the input data~~ of transmitting the absence response information to the ~~server.~~ server which transmits a message from the client.

13. (Currently Amended) A message-address management method for exchanging messages among a plurality of ~~servers,~~ servers and clients, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving, when ~~a mail~~ a message address of a ~~certain~~ member of ~~a mail~~ a message exchanging group changes, absence response information including at least an old address and a new address of the member;

~~extracting a mail address of another member of the mail group from a previously provided mail list for the mail group;~~

determining, from a plurality of provided message address lists, a message address list including the old address of the member, and extracting message addresses of the rest of the members of the predetermined message address lists;

specifying a server to which the absence response information is to be provided, on the basis of the ~~extracted mail~~ extracted message address; and

distributing the absence response information to the specified server.

14. (Currently Amended) A message-address management method according to claim 13, wherein the absence response information ~~received by the absence-response information receiving step~~ contains ~~information regarding a valid~~ a period of validity of the absence response information.

15. (Currently Amended) A message-address management method according to claim 13, wherein during the absence-response-information distribution ~~step~~ distributes simultaneously step, a plurality of pieces of the absence response information to

be distributed to the same server, ~~to which the absence response information is to be provided.~~ server are gathered together for distribution.

16. (Currently Amended) A message-address management method for exchanging messages among a plurality of ~~servers,~~ servers and clients, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving from a server absence response information including at least an old address and a new address of a ~~certain~~ member of a ~~mail group who uses the server;~~ a message exchanging group;

~~storing and managing the absence response information;~~

when receiving a message to be transmitted to another server, judging whether an address of an accepted transmission mail or not an original address of the received message matches the old address contained in the absence response information; and
information;

replacing the original address with a new address associated with the old address matching the original address;

transmitting the ~~mail after replacement of the address~~ message using the replaced address, with the new address, when the address of the mail matches the old address contained which is the new address in the absence response information.

17. (Currently Amended) A message-address management method according to claim 16, further comprising the step of:

sending, when ~~the mail~~ the message has been ~~transferred~~ transmitted to the new address, a message to an administrator of the message exchange system or a requestor of ~~the mail~~ the message transmission, the message reporting that the mail has been transferred to the new address.

18. (Currently Amended) A message-address management method for exchanging messages among a plurality of ~~servers,~~ servers and clients, the method comprising the steps of:

~~accepting, when a mail address changes, an input data of~~ creating absence response information including at least an old address and a new address corresponding to the ~~change;~~ message address, when a message address of a message exchanging group is changed; and

~~transmitting the input data of~~ the absence response information to the ~~server.~~ server which transmits a message from the client.

19. (Currently Amended) A message-address management apparatus for exchanging messages among a plurality of ~~servers,~~ servers and clients, the apparatus comprising:

~~absence response information accepting means for receiving, when a mail a~~
~~message address of a certain member of a mail group changes, message exchanging group is~~
~~changed, absence response information including at least an old address and a new address of~~
~~the member; is caused to be received from the client.~~

~~notice receiver extraction means for extracting a mail address of another~~
~~member of the mail group from a previously provided mail list for the mail group;~~

~~means for determining, from a plurality of message address lists, a message~~
~~address list including the old address of the member;~~

~~means for extracting message addresses of the members of the determined~~
~~message address list;~~

~~notice destination determination means for specifying a server to which the~~
~~absence response information is to be provided, on the basis of the extracted mail extracted~~
~~message address; and~~

~~absence response information distribution means for distributing the absence~~
~~response information to the specified server.~~

20. (Currently Amended) A message-address management apparatus
according to claim 19, wherein the absence response information received by the absence-
~~response information accepting means~~ contains information regarding a valid period a
period of validity of the absence response information.

21. (Currently Amended) A message-address management apparatus according to claim 19, wherein ~~the absence response information distribution means distributes simultaneously~~ a plurality of pieces of the absence response information to be distributed to the same server, ~~to which the absence response information is to be provided.~~
server are gathered together for distribution by the means for distributing.

22. (Currently Amended) A message-address management apparatus for exchanging messages among a plurality of ~~servers,~~ servers and clients, the apparatus comprising:

~~absence response information receiving~~ means for receiving from a server absence response information including at least an old address and a new address of a ~~certain~~ member of a ~~mail~~ a message exchanging group;

~~absence response information management means for storing and managing the absence response information;~~

~~address judgment~~ means for judging whether an ~~address of an accepted transmission mail~~ or not an original address of the received message matches the old address contained in the absence response ~~information;~~ and information, when receiving a message to be transferred to another server;

means for replacing the original address of the message with a new address associated with the old address matching the original address; and

~~transfer~~ means for transmitting ~~the mail~~ after replacement of the message using the replaced address with the which is the new address, when the address of the mail matches the ~~old address contained~~ address in the absence response information.

23. (Currently Amended) A message-address management apparatus according to claim 22, further comprising ~~transfer notification~~ means for sending, when the ~~mail~~ the message has been ~~transferred~~ transmitted to the new address by the ~~transfer means~~, means for transmitting, a message to an administrator of the message exchange system or a requestor of the mail ~~transmission, the message reporting that the mail~~ transmission to notify that the message has been transferred to the new address.

24. (Currently Amended) A message-address management apparatus for exchanging messages among a plurality of ~~servers~~, servers and clients, the apparatus comprising:

~~absence response information creating means for accepting, when a mail a~~ message address changes, an input data of of a member of a message exchanging group is changed, creating means creates absence response information including at least an old address and a new address corresponding to the ~~change~~, message address, and

~~absence response information providing~~ means for transmitting the input data
~~of the absence response information to the mail server.~~ server which transmits a message
from the client.